

Our Reference North East and North Cumbria ICB\
FOI ICB 26-012

North East and North Cumbria ICB
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By Email

20 April 2026

Dear Applicant

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information – NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB)

Thank you for your request received on 10 April 2026 for information held by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (the ICB) under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The ICB covers the areas of County Durham, Newcastle Gateshead, North Cumbria, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and Tees Valley.

Please find the information you requested on behalf of the ICB as follows.

Your Request

Could you please provide the following information regarding resource activity supported by Commissioning Support Units (CSUs) and/or consultancy providers for the last financial year (6 April 2024 to 5 April 2025):

1. A list of functions or services supported externally rather than delivered in-house (e.g. procurement support, analytics, transformation, programme management, contracting, communications, digital, Project Management Office).
2. For each function or service:
 - a. Whether support is provided by a CSU, a consultancy provider, or both.
 - b. The name(s) of the organisation(s) providing the support.
 - c. The route to market used (e.g. framework, direct award, call-off, competitive tender).
3. Whether the Integrated Care Board has an agreed strategy, operating model, or policy that sets out:
 - a. Which activities are intended to be delivered in-house.
 - b. Which activities are expected to be delivered via CSUs or external providers.

If any of the request is outside the scope of the FOIA, please answer what you can and advise and assist on the best way to uncover the remainder of the information.

Our Response

We can confirm, as per Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the ICB does hold the information requested.

1. National policy decisions over the past year have set in motion the full closure of all NHS Commissioning Support Units (CSUs) by 31 March 2027. This forms part of a wider restructuring of the NHS landscape, driven by the Government's 10-Year Health Plan and NHS England's parallel programme to reduce administrative overheads across Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). NHS England has confirmed that CSUs will cease operations at the end of March 2027, with transition activity underway throughout 2026 to ensure safe transfer of functions and appropriate workforce processes, including the national voluntary redundancy scheme.

This approach has been driven by the need to drive out costs and the national shift towards centralised digital and data infrastructure. NHS England has already begun designing a national approach to data management, including integration with the Federated Data Platform (FDP). CSU delivered data and analytics services will transition into this new national construct, with NHS England confirming that existing arrangements will remain in place temporarily to maintain continuity while the central model is established. This reinforces that the future of many CSU functions is expected to sit either within national platforms or through revised hosting arrangements involving provider organisations.

NENC ICB has significantly reduced expenditure on CSU delivered services by systematically reshaping its relationship with the North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS). The primary mechanism has been a deliberate shift toward in-housing: following a detailed review of the core SLA, multiple NECS delivered functions were transferred directly into the ICB, with staff TUPE transferred, and service lines embedded internally from 1 April 2025. This reduced both reliance on NECS and the associated overheads.

The following services are commissioned from NECS and the ICB intent in relation to future commissioning of each service is detailed within the tables below:

IT Support based services:

Service	Transition Approach	2026/27 Hosting	Future Provision
GPIT and Corporate IT Support Services	Local transition	Contract to be hosted by local FT	Medium to longer term solution to be identified and progressed via ICB Digital Team
Digital Transformation and Optimisation Service (DTOS)	Local transition (as above)	Contract to be hosted by local FT	As above

Data and Analytical based support services:

Service	Transition Approach	2026/27 Hosting	Future Provision
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Data Management & DSCRO	National transition	NECS	Continue with NECS in year, national transition
Primary Care Data Quality (including provision of EMIS Enterprise reporting)	Local transition	NECS -> ICB	Propose in-housing at point in time
SLAM financial data service	Local transition	NECS -> ICB	Propose in-housing at point in time
RAIDR	Local transition	NECS -> ICB	Propose in-housing at point in time
UEC RAIDR System Coordination Centre	Local transition	NECS -> ICB	To be replaced with FDP; continue with NECS until transition complete
Invoice validation (NCA) and claims service	Local transition	NECS -> ICB	Propose in-housing at point in time

Other products:

Service	Status/Next Steps
Vaccination Operation Centres (SVOC/RVOC)	Local transition; continue in year with NECS (26/27) and agreement of revised model with NHSE Regional office ahead of transfer by April 2027.
Health and Safety support	Local transition; continue in year with NECS and propose in-housing of service
Health and Growth Accelerator Programme Support	Local transition; continue in year with NECS and propose in-housing of service
Waiting Well Admin Hub	Local transition; continue in year with NECS and propose local hosting of service out with ICB
Medicines Optimisation in Care Homes	Local transition; novation to Local Authority
Digital Transformation in Care Homes	Local transition, 26/27 contract to be hosted by local FT

2. Please refer to the response to question 1.
3. Please refer to the response to question 1.

In accordance with the Information Commissioner's directive on the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 your request will form part of our disclosure log. Therefore, a version of our response which will protect your anonymity will be posted on the NHS ICB website <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/>.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number or at the above address.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to request a review of our decision, you should write to the Information Governance Manager using the contact details at the top of this letter quoting the appropriate reference number.

If you are not content with the outcome your review, you do have the right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the ICB's complaints procedure.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or www.ico.org.uk.

Any information we provide following your request under the Freedom of Information Act will not confer an automatic right for you to re-use that information, for example to publish it. If you wish to re-use the information that we provide and you do not specify this in your initial application for information then you must make a further request for its re-use as per the Re-Use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 www.legislation.gov.uk. This will not affect your initial information request.

Yours faithfully

Information Governance Support Officer

**Information Governance Support Officer
North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board**